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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, show favor to our land and bless us with Your grace. Transform us into people who look to You for guidance and seek to do Your will. Unite us to accomplish the things that honor You.

Strengthen the Members of this body to serve You as You deserve. Empower them to give and not to count the cost, to strive and not to heed the wounds. Help them to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for any reward except of knowing they are doing Your will. May each Senator daily strive to walk blameless, speak the truth, and honor You.

We pray in Your righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 25, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The time is divided between the two sides. The Republicans will control the first portion. The Senate is expected to resume consideration of the Defense authorization bill this morning. Today the Senate will recess under a previous order entered for our respective party conferences at 12:30 and reconvene at 2:15. At some point during today's session it is expected that we will receive a message from the House relating to the SCHIP program, children's health. The Senate will consider that message and take the necessary steps to conclude action and send it to the President.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

BURMA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, a remarkable scene is playing out in the country of Burma. For yet another day, tens of thousands of peaceful protesters demonstrated throughout Burma against the policies of that country's military junta, the State

Peace and Development Council. These protests were carried out in defiance of Government threats. They were led again by barefoot monks, dressed in saffron robes, who just a few days ago in a simple but powerful gesture unleashed a dramatic series of events. That gesture was the turning upside down of their alms bowls, a symbol of the monks' refusal to accept charity from the regime, an act that has the potential to awaken the world to the brutality of this iniquitous regime. Imagine the courage of their actions. Their nonviolent response is subject to imprisonment and torture from a regime that has done far more to citizens who have done far less.

Earlier today, President Bush spoke at the United Nations General Assembly; in fact, he is probably speaking as I speak. He indicated additional U.S. sanctions would be applied to the military junta. He also called for increased international pressure on this regime. The President should be applauded for his leadership in promoting democracy and reconciliation in Burma.

The struggle for freedom in Burma is not new, nor are we in Congress new to it. I am hopeful other countries will follow the lead of President Bush and the Congress on this issue.

Two nations are pivotal to this effort: India and China. Both have a major stake in a prosperous and democratic Burma emerging from this unrest. Failure to act in a constructive manner would be a poor reflection on India, the world's largest democracy. Failure to act in a meaningful manner would also be a poor reflection on China, as that nation begins efforts to showcase itself for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The United Nations Secretary General himself needs to directly engage the SPDC on this matter and call for

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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real progress toward the democratization of Burma; the release of all political prisoners, most especially including Aung San Suu Kyi; and the inclusion of ethnic minorities in a peaceful reconciliation process.

Pressure is mounting on the SPDC, both from within the country and from without. Yet there is a path forward for the regime, and that is the path of genuine reconciliation. The SPDC needs to follow the pragmatic model of apartheid South Africa in the early 1990s: Recognize the need to enter into good faith negotiations with the legitimate leaders of the people.

I wish to convey a few messages to those inside Burma: To the peaceful protesters, know that the friends of democracy are with you and we are awed by your courage and your determination; to the regime: Know that the eyes of the world are upon you and recall that the crackdown in 1988 was followed by sanctions your Government still labors under. Know too that as the Government of Burma, you are responsible for the safety and well-being of the demonstrators and also of Aung San Suu Kyi. Know that the path forward is through genuine reconciliation, not repression.

In closing, I note that the SPDC is much like any other despotic regime that holds onto power through terror, through force, and, frankly, through corruption as well. The SPDC will not give way easily to peaceful protests and resistance. We must let those in Burma who seek peaceful change know they do not stand alone.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Colorado.

NATIONAL FIRST RESPONDER APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize our Nation's first responders. I, along with Senators MCCAIN and CASEY, introduced S. Res. 215 recognizing today, September 25, 2007, as National First Responders Appreciation Day. The Senate acted quickly and passed this resolution by unanimous consent with a total of 33 cosponsors.

The contributions that our Nation's 1.1 million firefighters, 670,000 police officers, and over 890,000 emergency medical professionals make in our communities are familiar to all of us. We see the results of their efforts every night on our TV screens and read about them every day in the paper.

From recent tornadoes in the Southeast and wildfires in the West in 2007, and the Christmas blizzard in Colorado in 2006, to the tragic events of Virginia Tech, Columbine High School, Platte Canyon High School, and the wrath of Hurricane Katrina, our first responders regularly risk their lives to protect property, uphold the law, and save the lives of others.

Nationwide, many of our first responders take the call on a daily basis and are exposed to life-threatening situations. While performing their jobs, many first responders have made the ultimate sacrifice. According to Craig Floyd, Chairman of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, a total of 1,649 law enforcement officers died in the line of duty during the past 10 years; an average of 1 death every 53 hours, or 165 per year, and 145 law enforcement officers were killed in 2006.

In addition, according to the United States Fire Administration, from 1996 through 2005, over 1,500 firefighters were killed in the line of duty, and tens of thousands were injured.

It is also important to note that four in five medics are injured on the job. More than one in two, about 50 percent, have been assaulted by patients, and one in two, 50 percent, have been exposed to an infectious disease, and emergency medical service personnel in the U.S. have an estimated fatality rate of 12.7 per 100,000 workers, more than twice the national average, and most emergency medical service personnel deaths in the line of duty occur in ambulance accidents.

Yet to recognize our first responders only for their sacrifices would be to ignore the everyday contributions they make in communities throughout America. In addition to battling fires, firefighters perform important fire prevention and public education duties such as teaching our children how to be fire safe.

Police officers do not simply arrest criminals; they actively prevent crime and make our neighborhoods safer and more livable. And if we or our loved ones experience a medical emergency, EMTs are there at a moment's notice to provide lifesaving care.

Last Saturday, I hosted a first responder appreciation day in northern Colorado and was overwhelmed by the support shown to our first responders by the public. Farmers, ranchers, small business owners and members of the community alike thanked their firefighters, paramedics, sheriffs, deputies, and police officers for being there at a moment's notice to lend a hand while putting their own safety at risk.

As a practicing veterinarian and a former health officer in Loveland, Col-

orado, I can attest to the numerous times I called on first responders to help me get through a situation. In many ways our first responders embody the very best of the American spirit. With charity and compassion, those brave men and women regularly put the well-being of others before their own, oftentimes at great personal risk. Through their actions they have become heroes to many. Through their example they are role models to all of us.

To all of our first responders, thank you for your service. I ask my colleagues to please join me today in recognizing September 25 as National First Responder Appreciation Day as we honor first responders for their contributions, sacrifices, and dedication to public service.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arizona.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I wish to speak to two items that are before us as we are considering the Defense authorization bill this morning. The first has to do with an amendment that has been offered by Senator LIEBERMAN and myself and others to declare the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a terrorist organization, which would, if we do that, permit us to engage in economic sanction activity against the financing operations of the IRGC.

That is important, because according to all of the evidence we have, it is the IRGC that has been primarily responsible for the infusion into Iraq of the very dangerous equipment that has been causing great harm to our troops there, especially the new superpenetrator devices that are blowing up not just humvees but also even Abrams tanks.

It is the IRGC that is responsible for the training of Iraqis to be fighting our troops in Iraq and generally bringing the Iranian Government's anti-American activities from Iran into Iraq.

It is because of the IRGC's activities as a terrorist organization that our troops are dying in portions of Iraq today and, therefore, totally fitting for us to express our sense to the administration that it should designate the IRGC as a terrorist organization, thus, permitting us to invoke these economic sanctions against it.

The IRGC, interestingly enough, engages in a great deal of financial activity around the world, which makes these particular sanctions especially appropriate and potentially very effective. I am pleased it appears there will be an agreement on some slight modifications of language of the amendment which will permit us to, presumably, have a near unanimous vote when this amendment is considered, perhaps later this morning but certainly today.

I am looking forward to a colloquy with Senator LEVIN and Senator